



Photo by Megan Cambridge

# Brownfield Revitalization

Success Story, July 2004

## Port of Oakland - Cinema Project Alameda County

### Site Facts

*Site Name:*  
Port of Oakland Cinema

*Location:*  
Oakland, CA

*Site Size:*  
0.9 acres

*Historical Uses:*  
Manufactured gas plant

*Contaminants of Concern:*  
Volatile organic compounds,  
polynuclear aromatic hydro-  
carbons, and lead

*Deed Restriction:*  
Commercial

*Redeveloped Use:*  
Nine-screen movie theater

Before electricity made it possible to turn lights on with the flip of a switch, homes, businesses, and streets were illuminated by gaslight produced from coal at manufactured gas plants. The process that generated the gas also generated many hazardous substances including coal tar, oil and lampblack. While some of these pollutants were reused for asphalt and other purposes, much of it was stored or disposed of at the facility. These residuals polluted the soil and sometimes even the groundwater.

The Oakland Town Gas facility operated from 1866 until 1928 on part of the property that is now Jack London Square. From 1929 until 1963, Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) used it to store maintenance equipment and replacement parts. By 1971 all above-ground storage, as well as two 2,000 gallon underground tanks, were removed. The site was later used as a parking lot.

The Port of Oakland is a department of the City of Oakland that operates waterfront property. The Port has been redeveloping Oakland's waterfront areas since the 1980s. A major area of interest has been Jack London Square, "the Gateway to the City of Oakland." This property was selected as the site for the Jack London 9 Cinemas and the process of turning a brownfield into a valuable part of the community began.

The Port of Oakland entered into a Voluntary Cleanup Agreement with the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) in 1994 to characterize the Site and address any hazardous substances. Volatile organic compounds, polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons, and lead were detected in soil on the site. DTSC approved a Removal Action Workplan that required excavating "hot spot" areas of soil contamination and capping the site. In all, 2,300 cubic yards of contaminated soil were removed from three different locations as deep as ten feet. Continued groundwater monitoring was implemented and a deed restriction was placed on the property to ensure the land will only be used for commercial purposes.

The property has been successfully redeveloped into the Jack London 9 Cinema and the Port of Oakland continues to move closer to realizing its vision for the waterfront area. The successful redevelopment of this property exemplifies the benefits of the Voluntary Cleanup Program. This site reflected the legacy of contamination from historical land uses but through the Voluntary Cleanup Program DTSC worked with the project proponent to identify cost effective remedies and reclaim the land for good use.



State of  
California



Department of Toxic  
Substances Control